(i) statement made to Police relating to offences punishable with improsonment upto ten years be signed and quickly transmitted to the Magistrate (ii) recording of evidence of material witness under oath by Magistrate in all offences punishable with death or imprisonment for 10 years or more (iii) enhanced punishment for perjury.

Setting up of Supreme Court's Bench

4184. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken up with the Supreme Court the matter of establishing a bench of Supreme Court in the South;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) Government's policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The matter of setting up of bench of the Supreme Court outside Delhi has been taken up with successive Chief Justices. However, the Chief Justice of India has last conveyed on 16.11.2004 that the matter was discussed in a Full Court meeting of Hon'ble Judges but Full Court did not favour setting up of Benches of the Supreme Court outside Delhi.

(d) A Bench of the Supreme Court outside Delhi can be set up only by carrying out an amendment to the Constitution of India.

Setting up of election fund

4185. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up an Election Fund to fund elections;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) The Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of late Shri Indrajit Gupta on State Funding of Elections recommended the creation of a separate Election fund to which the Central Government may contribute at the rate of Rs. 10/-per elector *i.e.* about Rs. 600/- crores annually and all the State Governments also, taken together, may contribute proportionately Rs. 600/- crores annually to the Fund. Government has taken the views of the States/Union territories. Most of the States are prepared to accept the recommendation provided that the entire funding be borne by the Central Government.

(c) Does not arise.

Appointment of young judges

4186. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any minimum age fixed for a person to become a judge of any High Court;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what qualities does a person require to become a judge of a High Court;

(d) whether it is a fact that some State Governments have been recommending names of very young and untested people for appointments as judges in High Courts; and

(e) whether Government will develop guidelines and conventions to prevent nomination of very young people to High Courts?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (e) The minimum age limit for appointment of a person as Judge of a High Court from the Bar is 45 years. However, the Chief Justices' Conference held in December, 1999 unanimously resolved that members of the Bar over 40 years and less than 45 years may be recommended for appointment as Judges of High Courts only if they possess outstanding merit, and rigidity that the members of the Bar must be above 45 years of age for being appointed must not be insisted upon. For the members from the Judicial service, they should not have crossed the age of 58-$^1/_2$ years on the date of availability of the vacancy for the service quota.